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Lambda Letters Project

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Annual Meeting Announced

By Anne Daniels, Recorder

It's almost time again for the annual meeting of the Lambda Letters Project. Our meeting will occur on Saturday, January 21, 2006, at 11 AM. You are cordially invited to attend at the following location:

Shriners Hospital for Children
Seventh Floor Board Room
2425 Stockton Blvd. (between X and Y Streets)
Sacramento, CA 95817

If you will be unable to attend the meeting, please be sure to sign and return the enclosed proxy form right away. We will not be able to conduct business unless we have a quorum of one-third of the membership present in person or by proxy.

If you are not sure whether you can attend, please sign and return the proxy anyway. You can always revoke your proxy if you do attend the meeting in person.

Needed: A Few Good Men and Women

By Joy Fisher, Board Member

About a year ago I learned that the Lambda Letters Project was about to expand its board of directors. I was encouraged to submit my resume for consideration for appointment to the board, and I did. After a period of orientation, where a group of us applicants were educated about the work of board members, I was one of several people voted onto the board.

It's been quite a year! We learned that an "angel" had promised a large donation to LLP, but only if we developed a business plan. We did that, and then set about implementing it. We've organized a number of committees—legislative, publicity, development, personnel, and accounting.

We're in the process of hiring our first professional development director who will be charged with fundraising duties designed to put LLP on a financially sounding footing for a long time to come. This is a really exciting time to be a member of the LLP board, and we would like to extend an invitation to Lambda Letters members to consider joining us as board members.

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Thanks for a Good Year

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

This has been a wonderful year.

We lost on some important bills but we won on some good ones too.

As a group, you sent over 351,245 letters and e-mails to elected officials this year. By our joint efforts we are becoming a major force for good in California.

But now it's time to take a rest. The many volunteers at Lambda Letters have labored hard all during the year. So now we are giving them some time off.

As a result, this is the last regular mailing you will receive from us in 2005. You will get your next regular mailing in January, 2006.

In the meantime, I wish you well and hope you enjoy the holidays.

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters and Messages Collected

September, 2005	10,082 letters & e-mails
In all of 2005	351,245 letters & e-mails

Dollars Spent

September, 2005	$4,890
In all of 2005	$39,333

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

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Lambda Letters Project

Our Mission

To promote the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; and women. We do this by urging elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal.

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Publication of the name of any person or organization in articles or advertising in the Lambda Letters Project newsletter is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such person or organization. The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly, except in December, by Lambda Letters Project Inc., 6529 Cowboy Way, Citrus Heights, CA 95621.

Send address changes to Lambda Letters Project, 2528 Madison Avenue, San Diego, CA 92116-2922 or e-mail aeire.stickney@lambdaletters.org.

Discrimination Complaints

Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave? If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684. In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212. The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

Sponsors of Lambda Letters Project

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Your name or business could be here.

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Women's Issue

Support the Violence Against Women Act

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

On October 4 the Senate passed S 1197, its version of the Violence Against Women Act of 2005 (VAWA), by a unanimous consent agreement. That means that no senators had any objections to the bill, or else had withdrawn them. A less comprehensive version of VAWA 2005 passed the House of Representatives on September 28 as part of HR 3402, the Department of Justice's yearly authorizing and funding bill. These bills are meant to reauthorize the original Violence Against Women Act, which was passed 10 years ago—and expired on September 30.

While the House version included reauthorization of crucial VAWA programs, it does not achieve all that is needed. At the last minute, just before the vote, the Republican leadership dropped important provisions dealing with immigrants and women of color.

The Senate bill still includes many of these House-dropped provisions but faced its own trimming as a key program was dropped that would have extended coverage for unemployment insurance to domestic violence survivors who lose their jobs as they hide or flee from violence.

Whenever there are differences between similar bills that are passed in the House and Senate, a "conference committee" with representatives from both houses must meet to iron out the differences and come up with one final bill before the president can sign it. The compromise legislation must be approved as speedily as possible because the 10-year-old Violence Against Women Act has expired. We must ensure that programs and services will not be denied, delayed, or deferred.

Please write to your House of Representatives member. Urge him or her to support a compromise bill that closely matches the provisions of the bill passed by the Senate. Please also ask your representative to demand that the final version of the bill provide unemployment insurance benefits for domestic violence survivors who lose their jobs as they hide or flee from domestic violence.

HIV/AIDS Issue

Support National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

By Joy Fisher, Legislative Analyst

In 1998 the Congress and the Clinton Administration created the National Minority AIDS Initiative to help coordinate funding and provide prevention, care, and treatment services within the African-American, Hispanic, Asian-Pacific Islander, and Native American communities.

The following year, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) provided funding to five national nonprofit organizations known as the Community Capacity Building Coalition (CCBC). Among other things, the CCBC raises awareness among African-American communities about the dangers of HIV/AIDS in those communities, including awareness about the following grim statistics:

- At the end of 2003, more than 172,000 African-Americans were living with HIV/AIDS. This accounted for 50 percent of all new HIV cases, a disproportionate number because, according to the 2000 Census, African-Americans represent about only 12.3 percent of the population.
- In 2003 African-American women represented 67 percent of all new HIV/AIDS cases among women, and were 23 times more likely to be infected than white women!
- 69 percent of all children born to HIV-infected mothers in 2003 were African-American.
- In 2000 AIDS was among the top three causes of death for African-American men in the 25–54 age group and African-American women in the 35–44 age group.
- According to the CDC, since 1994 African-Americans have had the poorest survival rates of any racial or ethnic group diagnosed with AIDS.

On February 23, 2001, the CCBC organized the first annual National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, which is recognized each year on February 7.

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People of Color Issue

Improve the Health of People of Color

By Marty Martinez, Legislative Analyst

The health of people of color continues to lag behind that of the overall population. Effective solutions to eliminate these racial and ethnic health disparities require addressing several factors in the healthcare system, from ensuring that services are provided in a language-appropriate manner to encouraging a diverse healthcare workforce, providing resources to local communities to address the health needs of the uninsured and low-income, and addressing the need to collect good data to track disparities and our progress in eliminating them.

The Healthcare Equality and Accountability Act of 2005 (HR 3561) takes several steps toward the elimination of health disparities such as:

- Expanding healthcare coverage by allowing states to expand eligibility for Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)
- Removing cultural and language barriers and training health professionals to provide appropriate cultural and language services
- Expanding and creating programs that encourage minority health professionals to work in communities with high rates of low-income and minority patients
- Providing much-needed funding to communities to tailor programs to eliminate disparities
- Increasing the amount of data collected on health disparities to better track the causes and highlight innovative and effective solutions

Racial and ethnic health disparities are a persistent and growing threat to our health and prosperity. Ending racial and ethnic health disparities requires dedicated funding and resources. This bill moves us in this direction. Please write to your member of the House of Representatives in support of HR 3561.

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LGBTI Issue

Support the Federal Hate Crimes Bill

By Shirin Buckman, Legislative Analyst

Please write your senator and urge her to vote for HR 3132, the Children's Safety Act of 2005, with the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act as part of it. HR 3132 was amended in the House of Representatives to include punishment for hate crimes against individuals based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability as prosecutable hate crimes. It passed the House overwhelmingly as the first hate-crime legislation that includes protections for gender identity. This month we hope you will urge senators Boxer and Feinstein to ensure its passage in the Senate.

In the last five years, at least 11 gay, transgender, or questioning teens of color have been murdered. Seventeen-year-old Gwen Araujo was beaten, bound, strangled, and dumped into a shallow grave by four men after they learned that she was biologically male. Two of them were convicted of second-degree murder, but did not receive a harsher sentence because a transgender individual is not protected under current hate-crime legislation. This is only one case of many.

The purpose of hate-crime laws is to add weight to a sentence when a felony is committed because of a prejudice. It is important for two reasons that HR 3132 pass with the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act as part of it. First, it allows for federal law enforcement to partner with state and local law enforcement to prosecute hate criminals when the crime "is motivated by prejudice based on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, *sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of the victim*" (emphasis added). As the law currently stands, the perpetrator of a hate crime who has targeted an individual based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, and is tried in a federal court, would only be guilty of a felony. If it is passed, HR 3132 would allow the court to prosecute the defendant on a hate crime in addition to the felony, thereby adding to the guilty party's sentence.

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Special Issue

Oppose School Vouchers as Part of Hurricane Relief Assistance

By Pat Washington, PhD, Chair

Our nation's public school system was hit hard by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. Schools in several Gulf Coast communities suffered the brunt of direct damage from hurricane wind and water.

But other schools across the nation have been hit hard too as they open their doors to displaced students who need a new school to attend.

Nationwide, our school districts are in need of immediate aid. Local school districts in Gulf Coast communities are working nonstop to repair and rebuild neighborhood schools and are in dire need of financial assistance to do so.

That's why financial assistance promised in the Hurricane Education Assistance Act (HR 4017), introduced by Representative Sam Johnson (R-Tex.), is so vitally needed.

The Hurricane Education Assistance Act provides financial assistance to states and local educational agencies that enroll at least 10 students displaced by Hurricane Katrina or Rita, including any school funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Schools can obtain educational grants for the 2005–06 school year that provide financial assistance for a range of educational services, including teacher and staff salaries, materials and equipment, student transportation, and building maintenance and equipment, and special services and instruction.

Although financial assistance is needed for repairing, rebuilding, and restoring instructional services and educational facilities, HR 4017 contains thinly veiled language that allows private schools and faith-based educational institutions to have equal access to taxpayer dollars through emergency assistance grants that should be directed towards our public school systems.

Section 3 of the Hurricane Education Assistance Act authorizes one-time, emergency grants to parents of students attending any private school that is accredited or licensed or otherwise operates in accordance with state law. This section alone creates what the National School Board Association describes as "the nation's largest and costliest private school voucher program" of all time.

According to Michael A. Resnick, Associate Executive Director of NSBA, "As introduced, HR 4017 would authorize $488 million in vouchers, dwarfing any existing K-12 private school voucher program. With Congress already discussing a potential freeze on federal funds or cuts to public education, including critical programs like Title I, it would be unconscionable for Congress to simultaneously create an unprecedented and costly private school aid program."

Please oppose provisions in the Hurricane Education Assistance Act that would rob America's public schools of vital financial resources needed to provide the best education possible for our children—an education that is available without regard to race, income, religion, physical, or mental ability.

We need to safeguard our public education system and object to thinly disguised voucher programs that take advantage of efforts to meet the educational needs of our children in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

Please sign the sample letter addressed to your member of the House of Representatives. It is enclosed with this newsletter, along with the usual four letters we send you.

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Final Legislative Update for 2005

The state legislature closed for the year on September 9. Governor Schwarzenegger had until October 9 to decide whether to sign or veto each of the bills sent to him. Any bills passed by the legislature, but not signed or vetoed by the governor, by October 9 became law without his signature.

The following list shows the final outcome of many of the state bills tracked by Lambda Letters this year, including the actions taken by the governor on them. As you will see, the governor did fairly well on women's issues; he signed 75% of the women's bills that we supported. However, he got failing grades on all three remaining issue areas. We consider 65% a passing grade. His worst record was on bills of importance to people of color; in that area we gave him a score of only 36%.

Here is the list of bills.

HIV/AIDS Issues

AB 73 (Dario Frommer, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish the California Rx Prescription Drug Website Program, which would provide information to California residents about options for obtaining prescription drugs at affordable prices. This bill would require the website, at a minimum, to provide information about—and establish electronic links to—certain federal, state, and pharmaceutical programs, and pharmacies that are located in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Ireland that meet specified requirements.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 228 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To prohibit a healthcare service plan and a health insurer from denying coverage for the costs of organ or tissue transplantation services on the basis that the enrollee, subscriber, insured, or policyholder is infected with HIV.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 547 (Patty Berg, D–Eureka)
Purpose: To allow local governments to establish and maintain clean needle and syringe exchange programs without having to declare a health state of emergency every two weeks.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1142 (Mervyn Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To establish a statewide African-American Initiative to address the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on the health of African-Americans by coordinating prevention and service networks around the state and increasing the capacity of core service providers. The initiative would be implemented in five regional centers. It must be privately funded.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1597 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To allow local governments to use general funds received from the state government to pay for clean-needle and syringe exchange programs.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1677 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To require state prisons to allow nonprofits or healthcare agencies to distribute condoms and dental dams to prisoners in state prisons.
Status: Held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
LLP Position: Support.

LGBTI Issues

AB 12 (Chuck Devore, R–Irvine)
Purpose: To ask the California Law Revision Commission to study the feasibility of a law to provide that real property (such as a home) may be transferred to a beneficiary upon the death of the owner by recording, prior to the owner's death, a beneficiary deed signed by the owner of the property interest. Property transferred this way would not have to go through the long, expensive probate process.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 195 (Mervyn Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: When the State Personnel Board finds that a public employee (or an applicant for public employment) has been discriminated against by his or her employer in ways that are forbidden by state law, it may order that the employee be hired, reinstated, or upgraded with or without back pay and compensatory damages. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity are among the prohibited forms of discrimination. This bill would permit the State Personnel Board to award attorneys fees to the complainant.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 220 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco, Chair, Committee on Public Domestic Violence)
Purpose: To amend several codes' sections that refer to "battered woman syndrome" and change those references to "intimate partner battering." This bill would therefore help members of LGBTI couples who are subject to this battering.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 378 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: All persons in California have the right to be free from any violence, or intimidation by threat of violence, because of their race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or position in a labor dispute, or because another person perceives them to have any of those characteristics. Existing law allows an attorney general, district attorney, city attorney, or aggrieved individual to bring a civil action against any person who interferes by threats, intimidation, or coercion, with the exercise or enjoyment of an individual's rights. This bill would increase the statute of limitation for the initiation of such an action from one year to three years.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 723 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To require school districts to provide classes in tolerance for all the groups covered by California's hate crimes laws.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 849 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow same-sex couples to obtain marriage licenses in California and to establish that no clergy or religious organization can be required to solemnize any marriage to which they have a religious objection. This bill was gutted and amended. It now contains the wording of AB 19 which died

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on the Assembly floor.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 866 (Leland Yee, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: Current law has a form statement that candidates for political office may sign on a voluntary basis. It is a pledge to engage in a fair and clean campaign. This bill would amend the pledge to include a statement that the candidate will not use, or permit to be used, any appeal to negative prejudice based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1400 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To amend the Unruh Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of familial status, marital status, and sexual orientation.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1586 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To prohibit health insurance providers from refusing to insure transgender people.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 565 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To end the practice of reappraising (and raising the property taxes on) a home owned by two registered domestic partners when one of the partners dies. Would also end the practice of reappraising a home owned by one of them when the owner makes his or her co-owner a joint owner of the home.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 973 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To entitle employees of state and local governments (and school districts) who retired prior to January 1, 2001, to elect or change any optional retirement allowance, if specified criteria are satisfied. This would apply to their domestic partners too.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SJR 11 (Christine Kehoe, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To urge Congress and the president to adopt the Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2005 (HR 1059), which institutes a policy of nondiscrimination based on sexual orientation, and to repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.
Status: Sent to Congress and the president.
LLP Position: Support.

People of Color Issues

AB 13 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To prohibit, with certain exceptions, public schools from using the name "Redskins" as a school or team mascot, name, or nickname.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 15 (Jerome Horton, D–Inglewood)
Purpose: To encourage schools to include a discussion of the contributions of Filipinos to the war effort during World War II.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 22 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To establish the crime of trafficking of a person for forced labor or services and the crime of trafficking of a minor for sexual servitude, both punishable as felonies. This bill would also require restitution to trafficking victims. It would also require the Attorney General to make fighting human trafficking a high priority.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 76 (Dario Frommer, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish the Office of Pharmaceutical Purchasing within the California Health and Human Services Agency with authority and duties to purchase prescription drugs for state agencies. This bill would authorize the office to negotiate the lowest prices possible for prescription drugs.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Watch over concerns whether this is the most efficient way to reduce costs and also ensure that all necessary medications are available to patients.

AB 124 (Mervyn Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To require each state agency to establish an equal opportunity program to ensure that the state policy of providing equal access to state jobs, work assignment, training, and other employment-related opportunities for all qualified job applicants and employees—based on merit and nondiscrimination in every aspect of personnel policies and employment practices—is fully implemented. It would require the State Personnel Board to collect employment data based on race, disability, ethnicity, and gender.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 477 (Joe Baca, D–San Bernardino)
Purpose: To require the department to establish a four-year pilot project that would authorize certain individuals, who are not financially eligible to receive in-home supportive services, to purchase those services. The bill would require the pilot project to be conducted in three counties that consent to participate, and would require the department to develop eligibility guidelines for individuals who purchase services under the pilot project
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 482 (Loni Hancock, D–Berkeley)
Purpose: To require that certain limited-English students take an achievement test in English and then again in their native language.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Watch.

AB 855 (Karen Bass, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To provide that, with certain exceptions, a person convicted of drug-related felonies shall be eligible to receive CalWORKs benefits if he or she meets certain conditions of eligibility. This law would not apply to a person who has been convicted of unlawfully transporting, importing into this state, selling, furnishing, administering, giving away, possessing for sale, purchasing for purposes of sale, manufacturing a controlled substance, possessing precursors with the intent to manufacture a controlled substance, or cultivating, harvesting, or processing marijuana or any part thereof pursuant to Section 11358 of the Health and Safety Code.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1338 (Joe Nation, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To require that a dependent child of the court who is not a citizen of the United States and for whom the court has determined parental reunification is no longer an option,

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be provided an attorney specializing in immigration law who may pursue special immigrant status or any other avenue to obtain legal permanent resident status or citizenship for that child.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 23 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To require the Employment Development Department to send informational brochures on the Healthy Families and Medi-Cal programs to employers for distribution to their employees. This bill would establish a system to allow employees to have the family contribution payments for healthcare coverage under the Healthy Families Program deducted from the employee's pay and transmitted to the state. This bill would require the state to do outreach and marketing on the Healthy families program and Medi-Cal to enroll more qualified participants.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 60 (Gilbert Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow certain undocumented immigrants to obtain drivers licenses in California. These licenses would permit them to drive legally. They would not be legal for identification purposes or for entering a federal building or an airplane.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 112 (Deborah Ortiz, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: The state Department of Social Services distributes funds from the federal Refugee Act of 1980 to the counties in California. These funds pay for employment-related and English language training programs to immigrant refugees in those counties. Currently the money is divided up by percentages of refugees on public assistance in each county. If 10% of the refugees statewide, who are on public assistance, live in County A, County A gets 10% of the funds. This bill would require the state in allocating Refugee Employment Services money to distribute the funds based on differential weights for refugees based on the length of time they have resided in the United States.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 645 (Joe Dunn, D–Santa Ana)
Purpose: To create the Commission on the Unconstitutional Deportation of American Citizens during the 1930s. The bill would require the commission to gather facts regarding the removal and coerced emigration to Mexico of United States citizens and legal residents of Mexican descent between 1929 and 1944. Private donations would be solicited and the commission would not begin work until it is determined that sufficient private donations have been received. The bill would also establish the 1930s Reparations Fund in the General Fund, which would allow people who were wrongly forced out of the country during that time to seek damages in court.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 670 (Joe Dunn, D–Santa Ana)
Purpose: To express the apology of the State of California to those individuals who, from 1929 to 1944, were illegally deported, or coerced into emigrating, to Mexico as a result of the Mexican Repatriation Program, and to require that a plaque be placed and maintained in a public place to commemorate this event.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SCR 18 (Jim Battin, R–La Quinta)
Purpose: To proclaim November 2005 as California Indian Heritage Month, encourage its observance with activities that celebrate our uniqueness as Americans, and commend California Indian nations for their outstanding contributions to this state.
Status: Chaptered into law by the secretary of state.
LLP Position: Support.

SCR 22 (Jim Battin, R–La Quinta)
Purpose: To proclaim September 15 to October 15, 2005, inclusive, as California Hispanic Heritage Month, and encourage all Californians to observe this event in communities throughout the state.
Status: Chaptered into law by the secretary of state.
LLP Position: Support.

Women's Issues

AB 48 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To increase the minimum wage to $7.25 per hour, effective on and after July 1, 2006, and to $7.75 per hour, effective on and after July 1, 2007. It would provide for the automatic adjustment of the minimum wage on January 1 of each year thereafter, calculated by multiplying the minimum wage by the previous year's rate of inflation.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 70 (Bill Maze, R–Visalia)
Purpose: To require the Department of Motor Vehicles to provide a new set of license plates to a registered owner of a vehicle who provides certain evidence of having been the victim of rape or sexual battery.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 99 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To provide that restraining orders issued in domestic violence cases may have a duration of not more than five years (up from three years in current law) by the discretion of the court.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 112 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To require the courts to order priority for the enforcement of certain protective orders issued by the court. Priority would be given when an emergency protective order is issued based on the belief that there is imminent danger to the person or persons being protected. Also people being restrained by the order would be prohibited from owning, possessing, purchasing, receiving, or attempting to purchase or receive a firearm while the protective order is in effect.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 114 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To provide that when a defendant is accused of child abuse in a criminal action, evidence of the defendant's prior acts of domestic violence may be admitted to prove the defendant's conduct.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Watch.

AB 169 (Jenny Oropeza, D–Carson)
Purpose: To increase the penalties for employers who pay women less than men for the same work and to mandate the types of

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Legislative Update

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damages employees should recover if they are successful in bringing a civil action against their employer for willful violations of pay equity law.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 322 (Jenny Oropeza, D–Long Beach)
Purpose: To enact the Athletes Bill of Rights and enumerate the rights available to a pupil relating to gender equity in athletics. The bill would require the State Department of Education to post the bill of rights on its website and require a school district that elects to offer competitive or club sports to its pupils to print and post posters setting forth the bill of rights in several locations in schools.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 429 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To make several changes to law which increase the chances that a protective order, resulting from workplace violence or domestic violence, are promptly served on the accused.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 478 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: Prison inmates who give birth in prison may be declared eligible for a community treatment program. This bill would require that community treatment program to include prenatal care, access to prenatal vitamins, childbirth education, and infant care. This bill would also require the Department of Corrections to establish minimum standards for pregnant inmates who are not eligible for the program, including necessary nutrition and vitamins, information and education, and regular dental cleanings.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 755 (Hector De La Torre, D–South Gate)
Purpose: To require employers to pay employees for any rest period mandated by statute, regulation, or order of the Industrial Wage Commission. Would provide that the rate of pay for the rest periods of piece-rate workers in the agricultural and garment industries shall be the average piece-rate wage, defined and limited as specified. The bill would also provide that an employee working on a piece-rate basis who suffers injury as a result of the failure of an employer to pay required wages for rest periods shall be entitled to recover his or her unpaid average piece-rate wage for each rest period in any pay period in which a violation occurred.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 813 (Joe Baca, D–San Bernardino)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Health Services to provide information to consumers, patients, and healthcare providers regarding women's heart health risks, including signs, symptoms, risk factors, importance of prevention, early detection through appropriate diagnostic testing, and treatment options.
Status: Is in the Senate inactive file.
LLP Position: Support.

ACR 2 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To proclaim the month of October 2005 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
Status: Chaptered into law by the secretary of state.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 3 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To petition the president and Congress to protect and uphold the intent and substance of the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade, relating to reproductive rights, and to encourage all Americans to participate in the national celebration, "The March for Women's Lives," in recognition of that decision's historic importance in promoting women's rights.
Status: Approved and sent to Congress and the president.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 180 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require that the training of peace officers include identifying signs of human trafficking.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 615 (Liz Figueroa, D–Fremont)
Purpose: To require the state to do an education campaign aimed at promoting the awareness of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and its link to cervical cancer. The program must be supported by private donations, not government funds.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 644 (Deborah Ortiz, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To require that a pharmacist dispense prescription drugs and devices in a timely way unless to do so would violate the pharmacist's moral views or when the pharmacist views the prescription to be illegal or contraindicated for the patient. This bill prescribes the conditions under which the pharmacist may refuse to dispense the prescribed item.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support if moral and ethical reasons, as reason for refusing to dispense birth control pills, is removed from the bill. Religious objections would be the only valid reason.

SB 720 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To authorize a district attorney or city attorney to initiate and pursue a court action for contempt against a party for failing to comply with a court order entered pursuant to the Domestic Violence Protection Act. The bill would require any attorney's fees and costs ordered against a party in contempt of the above provision to be paid to the Office of Emergency Services for the purpose of funding domestic violence shelter service providers. The bill would also require the courts to tell the police about contempt rulings in these cases.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

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Search Reopened for Director of Development

The Lambda Letters Project (LLP), a non-profit corporation, is looking for an experienced development professional to develop, coordinate, and implement the organization's fundraising program. The position will be headquartered in Sacramento, California.

The position will oversee the process of identification, qualification, cultivation, solicitation of grants, donations, and major gifts, as well as the development and implementation of fundraising events, to further the mission of Lambda Letters Project's advocacy for LGBTI people, people living with HIV/AIDS, people of color, and women. The Director of Development will collaborate with the Board of Directors and network with members of LLP and the broader community to maximize LLP's acquisition of grants and donations from foundations, fundraising events, LLP members, and other individuals.

Qualified applicants should have a bachelor's degree and a minimum of three years' fundraising experience. Applicants with an appropriate advanced degree, demonstrated success with fundraising events, and grant-writing experience are preferred. Women and members of ethnic and LGBTI communities are urged to apply.

Applications may be submitted via postal mail and/or e-mail to Pat Washington. Send letter of application, contact information, resume, and three letters of reference from people who can attest to your fundraising ability to:

Pat Washington, PhD
The Lambda Letters Project
4537 Alamo Drive
San Diego, CA 92115
pat.washington@lambdaletters.org

Applications will be accepted until position is filled. Please no phone calls. LLP is an equal opportunity employer. *www.lambdaletters.org*

William Bennett's Inexcusable Remarks

The following letter was sent to the Salem Radio Network on behalf of LLP:

Salem Radio Network
6400 N. Beltline Road, Suite 210
Irving, Texas 75063

To Whom It May Concern:

The Lambda Letters Project strongly objects to former Secretary of Education William Bennett's being permitted to use his radio talk show to promote the idea that murdering African-American babies can reduce crime rates. We protest, in the strongest terms, the *mere suggestion* that "you could...abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down." It is irrelevant that Mr. Bennett followed these irresponsible and racist comments with a disclaimer about how it would be "an impossible...and morally reprehensible thing to do." We find these atrocious and irresponsible comments, voiced by Mr. Bennett during his September 28, 2005, radio talk show, to be a disingenuous attempt to re-inscribe on public consciousness the not-so-distantly-popular idea that black life is expendable.

We object to such utterances because we understand the power of language, as surely does Mr. Bennett, to promote violence and disregard for human life. We abhor even subtle attempts to further a climate where the killing of African-Americans is condoned or contemplated as an acceptable practice.

We are appalled that Mr. Bennett refuses to apologize for the racial insensitivity that characterizes his comments. A noted public figure—with the resources to reach thousands of radio listeners in a single broadcast—cannot be allowed to make idle comments about aborting black babies to reduce the crime rate in a country where black life is routinely devalued, discounted, and literally snuffed out as a matter of social policy, time and time again. Decency demands that your radio station take responsibility for the harm Mr. Bennett has caused with his remarks.

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Governor Fails Again

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

Each year the Lambda Letters Project rates the governor on the bills that we track and which make it to the governor's desk. If he signs a bill that we support, he gets a plus. If he vetoes a bill that we support, he gets a minus. An average score is computed for his actions on bills in each of the four issue areas we work on, and for his overall score on the bills we track.

For the second year in a row, Governor Schwarzenegger failed to get an overall passing grade on the actions he took on bills sent to his desk by the legislature. The minimum passing grade is 65%.

Here is how the governor's scores came out for 2005:

HIV/AIDS Issues: 60%
LGBTI Issues: 60%
People of Color Issues: 36%
Women's Issues: 75%
Overall Score for 2005: 58%

The governor got an overall failing grade, and he failed in three of the four issue areas that we track. However, we saw some improvement in the governor's scores this year. Here is how the governor's scores came out for 2004:

HIV/AIDS Issues: 33%
LGBTI Issues: 83%
People of Color Issues: 17%
Women's Issues: 70%
Overall Score for 2004: 51%

The governor actually lost ground on LGBTI issues this year. Of course, he vetoed what was arguably the most important bill to the LGBTI community this year: AB 849, the marriage equality bill.

To see the list of bills that the governor's scores were based on, please consult the Legislative Update found in the newsletter or go online to *www.lambdaletters.org*.

Needed: Men and Women

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Right now we have nine active (and I do mean active!) board members, and we would love to have another nine join us. In order to achieve a balanced geographical representation, we are particularly in need of members from the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Area. People from other parts of the state are welcome as well.

The board meets in Sacramento about once every six or eight weeks. LLP reimburses board members for their transportation costs to and from meetings if necessary.

If you are a member of LLP and support its goals, please consider joining us. You can read more about what's expected of an LLP board member by going to our website at www.lambdaletters.org *and reading the article entitled "LLP Board Seeks Growth."*

If you have any questions whatsoever, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to provide you with more information. To get more information or an application form contact the following individuals:

Pat Washington
(619) 582-5383
pat.washington@lambdaletters.org

or

Ellis Vance
(559) 431-8361
ellis.vance@lambdaletters.org

William Bennett

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We urge your radio station to issue a decisive, public reprimand to Mr. Bennett for making such irresponsible comments. In addition, we expect your station to terminate Mr. Bennett's employment if he does not publicly apologize for his remarks to African-Americans, in particular, and to the American public, in general.

We await your response.

Sincerely,

Pat Washington, Chair
Lambda Letters Project

HIV/AIDS Issue

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The legislation HCR 30 expresses support for the goals and ideals of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. It recognizes the fifth anniversary of its observation, on February 7, 2006. In addition, it does the following:

- Encourages state and local governments—including their public health agencies—to recognize the day, publicize its importance among their communities, and encourage individuals to undergo testing for HIV.
- Encourages national, state, and local media organizations to carry messages in support of National Black HIV/Aids Awareness Day.
- Encourages enactment of effective HIV prevention programs.
- Encourages states to enact HIV surveillance programs consistent with recognized infections disease control methods to ensure accurate data, better targeting of resources, and improved delivery of health services to those living with AIDS.

HCR 30 has passed the House of Representatives and is currently pending in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. Please write to Senator Barbara Boxer and Senator Dianne Feinstein in support of this important bill.

LGBTI Issue

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Second, in order for local and state police to be more effective, the amendment allows the Attorney General to share any kind of evidence that federal law enforcement may have collected on the offender. At the request of local or state law enforcement, the Attorney General may provide any type of assistance, *including financial assistance.* The amendment specifies that to be better prepared to investigate and prosecute a hate crime, local and state police may apply for a federal grant to subsidize their efforts. Because local and state law enforcement budgets are being cut, federal assistance in complicated hate crime investigations could be integral to bringing criminals to justice.

Please write your senator today and urge her to fight to retain the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act as an amendment to the Children's Safety Act of 2005. Let her know that passing strong hate-crime legislation is another crucial way to keep our children safe.

In Memoriam: Rosa Parks

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

On October 24, 2005, Rosa Parks died at the age of 92.

Rosa Parks is, or should be, a heroine of all the civil rights movements in this country. She was not a towering intellect. She was not highly educated. She was not a great orator. She was not wealthy. She was a seamstress who made or mended people's clothes.

And yet she, through a simple act, changed history. One day on the bus home from work, she was just too tired to get up and give a white person her seat on the bus. She was, of course, demanding her right as a black person to be treated just like any white person. In her day, and in her state, that was a novel idea.

Rosa Parks demonstrated something we all should remember. Simple people can do simple things which can overcome the injustices of the centuries. Think about it. Has anyone demanded that you give up your seat on the bus? We can all make a difference in the world by simply saying no when someone tries to deny us of our rights.

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